

EXCISE

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TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : ADEN, AMMAN, ANKARA, BAGHDAD, DHAHRAN, BEIRUT, BONN FOR CINCUSAFE, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, FRANKFURT FOR KINDSEY AIR STATION, ATTN: DSC INTELLIGENCE IDCA, HEADQUARTERS, USAEUR HEIDELBERG, KARACHI, KHARTOUM, KUWAIT, LONDON, RABAT, TAIZ, TEHRAN, TEL AVIV,

FROM : Amembassy JIDDA

DATE: April 19, 1965

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 16 (week ending April 19, 1965)

REF :

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INFO: (Cont'd). POLAD CINCSTRIKE/CINCMEAFSA, CHUSTM, COMIDEASTFOR, USMTM AIR FORCE SECTION, USMTM ARMY SECTION

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POLITICAL

1. Hajj

With the conclusion of the week long 'Id al-Adha ("Feast of the Sacrifice") Saudi Government offices and most businesses reopened on April 17. The city of Jidda, and particularly the area around the airport, remains jammed with pilgrims waiting for transportation home; many of them sleeping on the sidewalks.

Figures released April 14 indicate that this has been the second biggest Hajj in Saudi history, with a total of 283,319 foreign pilgrims reported. This is over 13,000 more than recorded last year and less than 3,000 below the all-time record established in 1961. The number of pilgrims from the U.S. is given as 12, one less than last year. Pilgrims from the Soviet Bloc were fewer than last year. Only 19 Soviet Muslims are recorded with none at all shown for Communist China vice 41 Russians and 8 Red Chinese in 1964. (UNCLASSIFIED)

2. Islamic Conference Opens in Mecca

The Islamic Conference called by the Muslim World League opened in Mecca on April 17. According to the press, some sixty delegations are present although the names of only 35 Government delegations have so far been published. The Conference was opened by King FAYSAL who emphasized the importance of adhering to the traditional principles of Islam and alluded to the danger of destructive influences at work in the Muslim world. After appealing for Islamic solidarity and the resolution of differences among Muslims, the King outlined Saudi Arabia's foreign and domestic policies. In what appears to be a reply to recent criticism of Saudi Arabia's Arabism by UAR commentators, Faysal declared that the Saudis stood with their Arab brothers in all that concerned them and that Saudi Arabia was at the forefront, not in the rear, of Arab causes. "All we ask", said the King, "is that our Arab brothers in turn give us loving and fraternal consideration and not be a source of trouble or harm to us." The nation's international policy, he continued, rests on adherence to the United Nations Charter and on neutrality between the major world blocs although Saudi Arabia will continue to support whatever cause it believes to be right. The Kingdom's domestic policy is that its government be in the traditions of the Shari'ah while seeking reform and progress. Finally, the King appealed to his listeners to consider the Palestine Problem as an Islamic one, not just an Arab political or economic problem.

The session was also addressed by the President of the Constituent Council of the League; the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia; League Secretary General Muhammad Surur SABBAN; and by the Prime Minister of Northern Nigeria, Haj Ahmadu BELLO, who replied to the King's speech on behalf of the various delegations.

The Conference is expected to continue for at least a week, with subcommittees being established to discuss various religious, political, economic, cultural and educational subjects. (UNCLASSIFIED)

COMMENT: With the exception of Palestine and his indirect reply to his Egyptian critics, Faysal's speech avoided specific issues. It has set a moderate, somewhat conservative tone which the conference is expected to follow. The absence of any Bloc delegations and the attendance of a number of religious leaders rather than political figures suggests that, with the presumed exception of the Palestine Problem, the conference is unlikely to take strong anti-Western or anti-U.S. resolutions. However, Imperialism, Colonialism, and Western Christian influences in Africa and Asia will probably be condemned in general terms. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

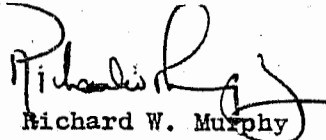
PSYCHOLOGICAL

1. Press Highlights

Some papers resumed publication April 14 and all had concluded their 'Id al-Adha holiday by April 17. The press continued to concentrate almost exclusively on news of the Hajj, with many pictures of King Faysal, other Saudi Princes and Cabinet ministers, and distinguished guests taking part in the religious ceremonies at Arafat and Mina. The opening of the Islamic Conference in Mecca called by the Muslim World League has been the major press story of the past two days. Other news items given some attention but no editorial comment include events in South Vietnam and President JOHNSON's statement that the U.S. is willing to enter into peace negotiations over Vietnam without conditions but that the U.S. is determined to remain in South Vietnam until its independence is assured; the ceremonies for the 10th Anniversary of the first Bandung Afro-Asian Conference in Djakarta; and various reports regarding German-Israeli preparations to establish diplomatic relations. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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Jidda


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Second Secretary of Embassy

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